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"THE MORMON QUESTION."

March 10, 1886.

We can afford to exercise true Christian charity towards the world, for "In God we trust," and this is not to us simply a meaningless motto. We know from bitter experience that we cannot rely upon man, nor depend upon the toleration and charitable spirit of modern Christendom. These we have "weighed in the balance and found wanting." But, calm as a summer's morning and without faltering, having counted the cost, and having placed all upon the altar of sacrifice, we can afford to await the issue, trusting in God "though he should slay us!"

The great trouble in relation to the "Mormon question," seems to be that we are so strongly entrenched behind the bulwarks of scriptural and true Christian religion that the ordinary weapons of reason, persuasion, and the Bible are powerless in the hands of our enemies to dislodge us, so they are compelled to resort to persecution, mobocracy and unconstitutional methods and means to combat the truth. While we may sincerely regret this fact, our enemies surely have nothing to be proud of nor we anything to fear.

One thing that we have known all the while, but which has generally been discredited, is now becoming patent to all the world. That is, it is not "Mormon" plural marriage that is the bone of contention. The crusade against us is no genuine struggle for morality nor for freedom and liberty, as was the struggle against slavery. Plural marriage, as practiced by the Latter-day Saints, is not slavery, nor has it the remotest resemblance in principle or fact to slavery, nor to the crimes of murder, forgery, suttee or any kindred evil; quite the reverse. "Mormon" marriage is not compulsory, it is optional; it cannot be otherwise except as a matter of faith and conscience on the part of believers. So far is it from being tinged with a single element of coercion or slavery, that we view it as absolutely antipodal to it.

In the first place, no man or woman is under any constraint to become a "Mormon," nor to remain one after becoming so, except the constraint of belief or conscience, which is beyond the domain of law or physical force; nor is anyone compelled to enter into the practice of plural marriage after joining the Church. Whoever does so, does it upon conviction of its rightfulness and upon his own untrammelled volition. Not only would it be impossible to compel obedience to this principle of our religion, as any one can see with half an eye, but it is contrary to the genius of the Gospel to enforce obedience to any principle thereof. It is lawful and proper to persuade men to see the truth and to embrace it. This was the mission of Christ and His Apostles. But after all, no far as obedience thereto is concerned on the part of mankind, "it is all free will and all free grace."

In view of this fact, then, what resemblance does plural marriage bear to slavery—to which it is claimed it bears the relation of "twin relics?" Whose rights does it interfere with? Whose liberties are abridged? Who is oppressed? Who is in bondage? What servitude is there about a condition voluntarily chosen by the parties concerned, and preferred by them to any other condition? It is useless to say it is not so because the condition of plural marriage is supposed to be unnatural. The facts exist. There is not one in a thousand in the Church who are practicing plural marriage that would exchange their condition for any other. As an evidence of this fact the utmost latitude is allowed and the easiest possible opportunities offered by the Federal authorities in Utah, absolute power being in their hands, to women in plural marriage to step out of it, their former husbands being considered morally bound to maintain them and their children after separation until the women marry again, if they marry at all. All the power of the Federal courts and all the influence of our enemies are also brought to bear to accomplish this end, and exerted to the prevention of entering into that relation.

To compare plural marriage with the Hindu practice of suttee, or burning widows upon the funeral piles of their husbands, or to the casting of infants into the Ganges, or to the idolatrous sacrifice of human life under the wheels of the car of Juggernaut, or to thuggism, or to the smaller crimes of "counterfeiting" or "forgery," is the

most absurd and contemptible nonsense. Anti-"Mormon" bigots and fanatics may use such comparisons, but certainly no rational person, on reflection for one moment, would admit any such comparison to be consistent.

On the one hand all these things are destructive of life, contrary to natural rights, to the enjoyment of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," and therefore injurious to the welfare of society and of humanity.

"Mormon" plural marriage gives life, is the source of happiness to thousands, and is injurious to none. It affords liberty to many a woman to get the husband of her choice, who would otherwise be compelled to marry a man not of her choice, or remain in celibacy, or do worse—perhaps sink into degradation and ruin, the victim of some man's brutal lust. "Mormon" marriage provides homes for women and children and makes men responsible for their conduct towards the female sex and towards their children. The taking of human life is a crime *per se*. Plural marriage may be pronounced a crime by legislative enactment but all the Congresses in the world cannot legislate into it, nor into the practice of it under divine command, a single element of crime.

"Mormon" plural marriage is not bigamy, nor polygamy, as defined by Webster, or as generally understood in the world, and defined by law. Bigamy consists of marriage by a man or woman, who is already married and undivorced, to either a man or woman, other than the legal husband or wife, and that without the knowledge or consent of the non-contracting husband or wife, or the person entering into the triple relation. Thus the married man or woman entering into bigamy, does so clandestinely so far as the other partner is concerned, and at the same time deceives the third party. Here is fraud, falsehood and deceit. These are elements of crime which we abhor and detest, and think should be prevented or punished. We do not believe in polyandry, and so far as any of these elements enter into polygamy or bigamy, we do not believe in either, nor do we practice them. We believe in and practice polygamy, or Bible plural marriage, as practiced by Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, Elishah, Gideon and the ancient patriarchs, worthies and people of God, under the sanction, approval and blessing of the Almighty.

In "Mormon" plural marriage no one is deceived; all the parties concerned are acquainted with the facts, and consent thereto. The rule has been for the first wife to be present and witness the ceremony of the second marriage of her husband, she giving her consent as did Sarah, Rachel and Leah of old. No one is defrauded or wronged; no one is injured, as they believe, but all feel equally blessed in the observance of a righteous and God-given privilege and blessing to all concerned. In the marriage rites of the Church, the first wife enters into the marriage relation with her husband, believing in and endorsing all the conditions of this marriage covenant, which embraces the feature of plural marriage. Besides and apart from this order of marriage, which is a sacrament of the Church, a religious ordinance, there exists throughout the community the right and privilege of marriage as a civil contract, which marriage may be performed by a justice of the peace, judge, or any legal officer. Both forms of marriage are open to members of the Church, and so far as they are concerned at their option. Still, while marriage as a legal contract is accessible to all, marriage by the rites of the Church, is accessible only to members of the Church in good standing therein. Indeed, marriage by Church rites is a privilege denied to all except members, and many of them are not allowed the privilege because of doubtful character or unworthy standing and membership.

The Holy Scriptures are the standard of morality, purity and fellowship in the Church. Only those who are considered in full fellowship, having unimpeachable moral character, supposed to be persons of pure, upright and honorable lives, free from moral leprosy or taint of sexual crimes and damning corruptions, are considered really worthy to enter into the holy relationships and assume the sacred responsibilities of maintaining plural families. There are far too many men in the world who are not worthy of one wife, much less the high privilege of raising families. I scarcely need mention the drunkard, the libertine, the gambler and a host of similar characters, or the incompetent, the imbecile, the low and brutal natures who are not capable of rising above the conception of physical force or brutal passions.

Our Gospel net having gathered of nearly all kinds, and it being unwise to pluck up the tares from the midst of the wheat, until the day of harvest, I am sorry to say that there are some who claim membership in the Church who are not worthy of the blessings thereof. But these must repent, and purify themselves or be purged out when their time shall come.

Nor was this practice born of lust as many suppose. A moment's reflection, it would seem, ought to suffice to correct this error. Men can generally gratify this passion as they do their appetite for tobacco or liquor, by purchasing the object of their desire for a simple money consideration. They simply buy what they want, and if honest in their deal, pay for it, taking care not to purchase more than their lust requires, if they can avoid it. Plural marriage involves all the obli-

gations, duties, labors and responsibilities, and expenses of maintaining large families. It is absurd to suppose that men would assume all these consequences, simply to gratify lust, when that base passion may be indulged to riotous excess for the mere outlay of a few paltry dollars and cents.

Men who are seeking for the gratification of lust, the way the world goes now, do not generally seek to preserve the honor and chastity and good names of their victims, nor to acknowledge and provide for their offspring. They do not attempt to provide them homes, bestow upon them their names, make them to feel that they are honored as wives and children, having claim upon their husbands and fathers for support, education and paternal affections. These are not the practices of lust. On the contrary, they are too expensive, too burdensome, too difficult and too irksome for the thing gained. It would be "paying too dear for the whistle," at this figure, all other things being agreeable, but when to this is added the popular fury, prejudice and hatred to be met with in opposition to this practice throughout the civilized world, while, as before said, to gratify lust requires no sacrifice, no responsibility, no effort, and comparatively no expense, the absurdity, if not the idiocy, of such a proposition stands out in bold relief. Whatever else may be said in relation to the origin of this principle, it is very clear that lust is neither its father nor mother.

Many do not believe that we have ever received any revelation from God enjoining plural marriage. But do they know that we have not? What will the negative belief of millions of men, who simply do not believe, but have no knowledge on the subject, weigh in the scales against the actual knowledge of two or three witnesses? Witnesses by the thousands can be produced who will testify that God has given a Revelation enjoining plural marriage upon the faithful members of the Church. And I defy all the world to impeach their testimony. These witnesses may be called "fanatics," "deluded," "deceivers," "false prophets," etc., for such epithets are the strongest arguments of our foes, but by the rule laid down by Christ himself they can demonstrate the truth of their testimonies beyond the power of man to disprove it. This is why the Devil is mad at us. We not only believe but we know that plural marriage first came to us through Joseph Smith the martyred Prophet. Brigham Young received it from him, although God may have prepared his mind beforehand to receive it, and so he did to scores of others, some of whom are still living and still bearing their testimony to the truth.

Upon this point the sons of the Prophet may quibble, but they do so in the face of the fact. They have no room for argument. The names of E. R. Snow Smith, Emily D. P. Smith, Eliza M. P. Smith and other honorable, intelligent and refined ladies, whose address is Salt Lake City, have borne their testimony to the world as the wives of the martyr, and they are still living to be interrogated. It is true the Book of Mormon forbade plural marriage to the ancient Nephites, and enjoined monogamy. There was a reason given for it. And it is the only instance known in holy writ of the kind, but there is nothing in the Book of Mormon enjoining the Almighty from commanding plural marriage, as he has done through the Prophet Joseph Smith in this dispensation. On this subject the Book says: "For if I will, saith the Lord of Hosts, raise up seed unto me, I will command my people, etc."—B. of M. p. 133, par. 30.

It is firmly believed by many that plural marriage is the cause of our persecutions, and if abandoned by us, we would have no cause to fear any further persecutions. The present crusade is not a struggle against plural marriage alone, nor in the interests of morality. Quite the reverse. It represents a despotism of the most grinding character, for the destruction of every vestige of local self-government. And it works by falsehood, fraud, trickery, usurpation and tyranny, while its battle cry against "polygamy" is created to deceive, and repeated and echoed to mislead. "It is simply a *ruse de guerre* to bide the brutal villainy and outrageous hypocrisy of the whole infamous plot."

The Edmunds law of '82, under the rule of five commissioners, has effectually covered the question of polygamy, so far as human enactments can do it. The death penalty might be added to the law, although unnecessary, for under it now, by the ruling of courts, a man may be imprisoned 1,095 years and fined \$100,500 and costs! Never was there a greater burlesque on justice, equity and equal rights than is being perpetrated in Utah today by the carpet-bag minions of the United States. Non-"Mormons" who are guilty of the grossest and most infamous violations of law and decency, including U. S. officers, are summarily discharged from the custody of subordinate courts on *habeas corpus*, while witnesses of their lecherous crimes are tried for "conspiracy," convicted, and punished by excessive pains and penalties, because they are "Mormons."

The new Edmunds monstrosity, now pending in the House of Representatives, is not aimed at "plural marriage" but at robbing us of our Church property, and utterly destroying our Territorial government and the organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

JOSEPH F. SMITH.

NO FAIR TRIAL FOR A "MORMON."

THAT a fair trial to a "Mormon" accused of infraction of the Edmunds law is impossible in Utah, has been demonstrated many times. It received another illustration in the intemperate, sneering, anti-"Mormon" harangue made by Judge Zane at the Murrayite meeting to berate the Administration last Monday evening. It was so mean, vindictive and personal and so indecorous in a judicial officer, that even ardent opponents of the "Mormon" system express their disgust or their disapproval of the Chief Justice's tirade. If the apologists for Judge Zane cannot see the impropriety of his attack upon the faith, conduct and leaders of a people on so many of whose cases he daily sits in judgment, and the wrong of pronouncing men criminals before trial, whose cases are pending in his court, we pity their obtuseness and concede that it is useless to talk to them about good taste or common decency.

Such exhibitions of spleen and personal animosity as those given by Judge Zane should be enough to act as hints to the objects of his hatred—to avoid coming to trial in his court, by all possible means. His indecent gloating over the supposed condition of President George Q. Cannon, who is under indictment in his court, would be of itself a sufficient justification for the defendant's determination to remain absent. Who that is sensible to "the first law of nature" would wish to stand a trial before a Judge that openly declares his prejudice and prejudgment?

A fair trial in the Utah courts is not possible to a "Mormon," because the juries which are selected for the purpose are chosen from the enemies of the accused. An impartial jury, under present arrangements, is an impossibility. The issues that have been raised are of such a nature and intensity that most of the non-"Mormons," from which class juries are picked, are strong partisans. They are as eager to convict as the prosecuting officers, and they display an animus against all "Mormon" defendants that is truly fiendish. And then the Judges are inspired with the same spirit, exposing their vindictiveness in charges to juries, in savage and polemical attacks when passing sentence, and in rude and vulgar harangues in public assemblies. Under such circumstances what chance is there for justice? Nay, put justice aside, what hope can there be for an impartial administration of the law?

The regime of Judge Zane is a repetition of the persecuting sway of the bigoted McKean, only the latter was an intolerant sectarian, while the former affects the role of the carping cynic and the jeering infidel. The acts and speeches of the departed jurist are now but a bitter memory, dimming the fame of one who would but for that have found an honored sepulchre. The doings and sayings of the present bench-preacher and stump-declamer are destined to the same fate. In but a little while they will sink into oblivion. And the people whom he insults will, in peace and serenity, yet look back on his vituperative and oppressive career as upon an unpleasant dream, when he has found his level among his own kind of rabid and malignant spirits. While the men whom he reviles will be honored by the good, and the principles he ignorantly assails and ridicules will spread throughout the world and give joy to millions of intelligent souls, delighting in the truths and liberties which he now thinks to trample under foot.

The firm execution of wholesome law is an honor to the officer who thus discharges a sworn duty. All worthy citizens should respect the man who so comports himself, even though his just course may work hardship to them. But when spleen, ribaldry, anger, prejudice, merciless vengeance and gibing malice are openly exhibited in the pretended administration of justice, disgust drives out all respect and resistance takes the place of submission.

We regard the law itself, which it seems it is the special object of the Utah courts to execute, as an unworthy enactment, forced from the legislative power by sectarian and mob influence. Its administration we look upon as unspeakably despicable, and an eternal disgrace to those who make it the vehicle for the gratification of personal spite and credulity. We think those are wise, who, picked out for vengeance, evade pursuit and wait for a fair adjudication. And the more we think of the case of the gentleman who has avoided trial at the loss of his bond-money, the more it appears to be fully justified by the circumstances, and by the plain indications that he would have been at the mercy of a prejudiced and venomous judge as well as a packed and partial jury.

THE TRUE INWARDNESS OF THE REMOVAL.

THE plea of political expediency which is put forth by the apologists of ex-Governor Murray as the occasion of his removal, will have to be entirely abandoned. The true inwardness of the causes seems to be well understood by the press correspondents at

the nation's capital. The President has been watching the course of the obstructionist and has noted his acts of nullification. And, bearing in mind now Murray had deceived him, and betrayed him into a hasty order for the forwarding of troops to Utah on the basis of a falsehood, he perceived the unreliability of the man and his total unfitness for a responsible position. The reasons for the removal were not the offspring of party motives, but were prompted by the necessity of the case, and a determination to do justice to the people whose interests were placed in jeopardy by the folly and wickedness of a despotic official. The New York Herald's Washington correspondent has the matter very clearly set forth in his dispatch to the chief Democratic daily, as follows, from which it will be seen that Baskin's mission, so far as it relates to the retention of Murray, is not likely to accomplish anything "in the direction sought."

"The resignation of Eli H. Murray, Governor of Utah, was demanded by the President, because of the former's course in vetoing the appropriation bill passed by the Legislative Assembly of Utah. The President has been fully advised in regard to Murray's conduct, and he was perfectly satisfied that in his veto of appropriations he was not actuated by worthy motives. Since Murray sent sensational telegrams to Washington in the early part of December, representing the imminence of an uprising by the Mormons, the President has been convinced that he was unworthy of confidence. He felt very much chagrined when he discovered the truth in regard to the situation in Salt Lake City, and that he had ordered thither additional troops. Subsequently it was charged to the President that the stories about a threatened Mormon revolt were concocted in accordance with an agreement entered into at a meeting of Murray and his friends at the Walker House in Salt Lake City, and that the object was to create a public apprehension, which would further his personal interests. The veto of the appropriations made by the Utah Legislature the President considered an indefensible and wanton exercise of authority.

He made a careful examination of the subject, and found that Governor Murray could find no objections to the appropriations themselves, but because the Legislative Council would not confirm his nominations to Territorial offices he spitefully refused his assent to the bill. The approval of the Governor is necessary to the enactment of laws in the Territory. It is believed also that the Governor was under the impression that in the present situation the President would not dare to remove him; that he would hesitate to touch an official who had posed as the champion of anti-Mormonism. Murray was greatly surprised when he received the telegram of Secretary Lamar demanding his resignation. Instead of sending it forthwith he replied that it would be forwarded by a Mr. Baskin, who is coming as the representative of the Utah Gentiles to urge Congress to enact measures to disfranchise all Mormons in the Territory and to turn over the government thereof to the one-twentieth who are anti-Mormons. It is supposed that a desperate effort will be made to induce the President to let Murray remain Governor a little while longer. It will be without avail. The President is determined on Murray's removal."

THE LATEST SCHEME OF POLITICAL INFAMY.

In another part of this paper will be found the text of the new anti-"Mormon" bill, which it is claimed Commissioner McKay had a hand in preparing, which is now in the hands of the House Committee on the Judiciary, and is expected to take the place of the Woodburn bill, and to be grafted on to the Edmunds bill, which is to be mutilated and amended. It appears that there are many objections to the Woodburn measure, as that, in terms, legislates against belief. There are still some old-fashioned people in the Congress of the United States who have respect to the spirit and letter of the Constitution, and object to making a citizen's belief, however unorthodox, the ground for his disfranchisement. For that reason the Woodburn piece of barefaced villainy does not find extensive favor.

The fatal error in the Woodburn bill will doubtless prove the death of the Idaho law, by which the "Mormon" citizens of our neighboring Territory have been temporarily deprived of every political right, for they are both framed upon the same principle. They virtually make belief a crime, and are antagonistic to constitutional law as interpreted by the Supreme Court of the United States.

It will be observed on a close perusal of the new bill, intended to be worked into the Edmunds monstrosity, that the word "belief" is carefully excluded. The language employed is cunningly framed to convey the same purpose as that of the Woodburn scheme, without its verbal defect. It is a change of words but not of meaning. The intent is to disfranchise nearly all of the people of Utah because they are "Mormons," without saying so in those terms. The words "Mormon," "Latter-day Saint," and "Church" are intentionally omitted,